

1 maccabees

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1 Maccabees

1 Maccabees is first book of Maccabees provides the history about Maccabean revolt against Seleucid Empire till the death of Simon the Hasmonean ^[1].

The spoken language of Judeans during the time of Maccabean revolt was Aramaic. In 1 Maccabees 12:37 (Septuagint) - "Upon this they came together to build up the city, forasmuch as part of the wall toward the brook on the east side was fallen down, and they repaired that which was called Caphenatha"^[1]. Caphenatha in Septuagint is a transliteration of an Aramaic word, because "tha" in "Caphenatha" is Aramaic definite article on a feminine noun in an emphatic state ^[2]. According to Book "City of Jerusalem" by Colonel C. R Conder (Pg. 100), Caphenatha is Aramaic word for a "heap."

But in Aramaic version, it says "Aphaytha" in 1 Maccabees 12:37 and not "Caphenatha" ^[3]. But both Aphaytha (Aramaic version) and Caphenatha (Greek Septuagint) do contain Aramaic definite article "tha" which is mentioned above.

Aramaic version of 1 Maccabees is found in the book "Translatio Syra Pescitto veteris testamenti: ex codice Ambrosiano sec. fere VI. photolithographice edita." Greek version of 1 Maccabees is found in Septuagint ^[1]. 1 Maccabees (Aramaic version) is available here to download ^[4]. 1 Maccabees (Aramaic version) in the Book "Translatio Syra Pescitto veteris testamenti" (mentioned above) does contain plural markings for the words in plural form.

Differences between 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees

The differences between 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees conclude that the author of 1 Maccabees is not the author of 2 Maccabees.

Unlike 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees violates Deuteronomy 18:11 by communicating with dead spirits (2 Maccabees 15) and the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in 2 Maccabees (2 Maccabees 9) is very different from the death of Antiochus Epiphanes mentioned in 1 Maccabees (1 Maccabees 6). Another difference is the campaign of Lysias, which 1 Maccabees 4:26-34, places in the last year of Antiochus Epiphanes, is transferred in 2 Maccabees 11 to the reign of Antiochus Eupator.

The feast of rededication in 1 Maccabees (1 Maccabees 4:52-59) happens before the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 6). But the feast of rededication in 2 Maccabees (2 Maccabees 10) happens after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Maccabees 9).

Significant details about 1 Maccabees

Aramaic version of 1 Maccabees (written in Estrangela script) was written during the rule of John Hyrcanus (135-104 BC) probably in Galilee since 1 Maccabees has to do with the revolt of Hebrews against Seleucid army.

The claim that 1 Maccabees was written during the rule of John Hyrcanus (135 - 104 BC) in Galilee is supported by certain words and Aramean calendar used in Galilee, Lebanon, Syria, and Northern Aramaic regions. For Example, the use of word "Suri" (for Aram) in 1 Maccabees.

Prior to the conquest of Alexander the Great (356 to 323 BC), Syria was called Aram. This can be seen in Aramaic OT ^[5].

Greeks called Arameans as "Syrians" and "Aram" as Syria ^[6]. After the conquest of Alexander the Great, "Suri" (Syria) replaced Aram due to its popularity. In 1 Maccabees 11:2, the word "Suri" is used instead of Aram ^[4].

But in later years, "Suri" became "Suria" and "Suria" is the word used for Aram in first century Israel ^[7]. But Aramean(s) remained the same ^[8].

In Judea, Idumea, & Egypt, Hebrew Calendar was commonly used while Galilee, Lebanon, Syria, and other northern Aramaic regions commonly used Aramean calendar (aka Syrian Calendar) although Aramaic speakers were familiar with both Hebrew and Syrian calendars.

There are some differences between Hebrew Calendar and Syrian Calendar which can be read in this link^[9].

Here is an example of the differences in the calendar used in 1 Maccabees.

1 Maccabees 1:54-55 (Septuagint) - "Now the fifteenth day of **the month Casleu**, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. ^[1]"

In 1 Maccabees 1:54 (in Aramaic OT aka Peshitta Tanakh), it says "And in the fifteenth in **Kanun**..."^[4]."

In Aramaic OT, Kanun is used instead of Casleu (translation of "Kislev") in Septuagint.

It must be noted that the antiquity of 1 Maccabees can also be seen through the word "Shlita."

Roman Governors used Greek title "Hegemon" which means Governor or procurator or a prefect ^[10].

Since Romans (under Roman Governor Pilate) governed the region of Judea in first century AD, the word "Hegemon" was loaned into Aramaic and it came to be called "Hegemona."^[11]

Prior to Roman governorship in Judea, the word for Governor in Aramaic was Shlita which can be seen in 1 Maccabees 11:59 in Aramaic version ^[12].

Differences between 1 Maccabees (Aramaic version) and 1 Maccabees in Greek Septuagint

There are several differences between 1 Maccabees (Aramaic version) and 1 Maccabees in Greek Septuagint.

Below shows a verse that show the differences between 1 Maccabees (Aramaic version) and 1 Maccabees in Greek Septuagint. Aramaic version of 1 Maccabees (mentioned below) is from this source ^[13].

Septuagint version of 1 Maccabees (below) is from this source ^[1].

1 Maccabees 2:1-5 (Septuagint) - "In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin. 2 And he had five sons, Joannan, called Caddis: 3 Simon; called Thassi: 4 Judas, who was called Maccabeus: 5 Eleazar, called Avaran: and Jonathan, whose surname was Apphus."

1 Maccabees 2:1-5 (Aramaic OT) - "In those days arose Mattitha, the son of Yukhanan, the son of Shimeon, a priest from the sons of Yonadab, from Jerusalem, and has dwelt in Moraim. 2. He had

five sons, Yukhanan called Gaddaz. 3. Shimeon called Tarsaz. 4. Yuda called Maqabaya. 5. Eleazaran called Khoran and Yonathan called Khaphus."

The names are extremely different. In Septuagint, Gaddaz becomes Caddis, Tarsaz becomes Thassi, Maqabaya become Maccabeus, Khoran becomes Avaran, and Khapus becomes Apphus. The place "Moraim" becomes "Modin." Yonadab in Aramaic OT becomes Yoarib in Septuagint.

Gaddaz (in Aramaic version) is called Gaddis in Latin version of 1 Maccabees ^[14].

Notes - In Aramaic, "H" in Yehuda is silent although "H" is written in these names. Here are some examples with "H" silent in Aramaic - the name "Yehuda" becomes "Yuda" (Jude or Judas), Yehudith becomes Yudith (Judith), Yehudaya becomes Yudaya (Judean), etc. In Aramaic, "H" in these types of names are silent except after proclitics ^[15].

1 Maccabees 10:50-66 in Septuagint is not in 1 Maccabees of Aramaic version. After the verse 1 Maccabees 10:49 in Aramaic version, the next verse is the verse 67 of 1 Maccabees 10 (in Septuagint) with some differences^[16].

1 Maccabees 10:48-51 in Aramaic OT and 1 Maccabees 10:48-68 in Septuagint

Here is the translation from 1 Maccabees 10:48-51 from Aramaic OT ^[16].

1 Maccabees 10:48 - And Alexandras has gathered a great army and has camped opposite Demetrius.

1 Maccabees 10:49 - And two kings made battle and the camp of Demetrius has fled and Alexandras pursued him and was strengthened over them and has prevailed the battle of Demetrius.

1 Maccabees 10:50 (1 Maccabees 10:67 in Septuagint) - Demetrius who from Qarta (Crete in Septuagint) and has fled to the land of his fathers.

1 Maccabees 10:51 (1 Maccabees 10:68 in Septuagint) - And Alexandras King has heard [it] and has proclaimed good to himself and has returned to Antioch.

1 Maccabees 10:48-68 in Septuagint (Differences are in BOLD Letters below).

Septuagint version of 1 Maccabees 10:48-68 (below) is from this source ^[1]

48. "Then gathered king Alexander great forces, and camped over against Demetrius. 49 And after the two kings had joined battle, Demetrius' host fled: but Alexander followed after him, and prevailed against them. 50 **And he continued the battle very sore until the sun went down: and that day was Demetrius slain.**

51 Afterward Alexander sent ambassadors to Ptolemee king of Egypt with a message to this effect: 52 Forasmuch as I am come again to my realm, and am set in the throne of my progenitors, and have gotten the dominion, and overthrown Demetrius, and recovered our country; 53 For after I had joined battle with him, both he and his host was discomfited by us, so that we sit in the throne of his kingdom: 54 Now therefore let us make a league of amity together, and give me now thy daughter to wife: and I will be thy son in law, and will give both thee and her as according to thy dignity.

55 Then Ptolemee the king gave answer, saying, Happy be the day wherein thou didst return into the land of thy fathers, and satest in the throne of their kingdom. 56 And now will I do to thee, as thou hast written: meet me therefore at Ptolemais, that we may see one another; for I will marry my daughter to thee according to thy desire.

57 So Ptolemee went out of Egypt with his daughter Cleopatra, and they came unto Ptolemais in the hundred threescore and second year: 58 Where king Alexander meeting him, he gave unto him his daughter Cleopatra, and celebrated her marriage at Ptolemais with great glory, as the manner of kings is.

59 Now king Alexander had written unto Jonathan, that he should come and meet him. 60 Who thereupon went honourably to Ptolemais, where he met the two kings, and gave them and their friends silver and gold, and many presents, and found favour in their sight.

61 At that time certain pestilent fellows of Israel, men of a wicked life, assembled themselves against him, to accuse him: but the king would not hear them. 62 Yea more than that, the king commanded to take off his garments, and clothe him in purple: and they did so. 63 And he made him sit by himself, and said into his princes, Go with him into the midst of the city, and make proclamation, that no man complain against him of any matter, and that no man trouble him for any manner of cause.

64 Now when his accusers saw that he was honoured according to the proclamation, and clothed in purple, they fled all away. 65 So the king honoured him, and wrote him among his chief friends, and made him a duke, and partaker of his dominion. 66 Afterward Jonathan returned to Jerusalem with peace and gladness.

67 Furthermore in the; hundred threescore and fifth year came Demetrius son of Demetrius out of Crete into the land of his fathers: 68 Whereof when king Alexander heard tell, he was right sorry, and returned into Antioch."

NOTES - Unlike Aramaic OT, there are inconsistencies in Greek Maccabees. Unlike Aramaic OT, Greek Maccabees (Septuagint) says Demetrius was slain. But in Greek Maccabees (Septuagint), it doesn't say when the so called "Demetrius son of Demetrius" came to power and it doesn't make any sense why King Alexander was right sorry when Demetrius out of Crete went into the land of his fathers, because Demetrius was the enemy of King Alexander.

Josephus on Greek version of 1 Maccabees

During his time, Josephus writes that no Greek translations of Hebrew history has been made especially from the time period where prophets leave off.

Judean Wars Book 1, Preface, Paragraph 6 - "To write concerning the Antiquities of the Judeans, who they were [originally], and how they revolted from the Egyptians, and what country they traveled over, and what countries they seized upon afterward, and how they were removed out of them, I think this not to be a fit opportunity, and, on other accounts, also superfluous; and this because many Judeans before me have composed the histories of our ancestors very exactly; as have some of the Greeks done it also, and have translated our histories into their own tongue, and have not much mistaken the truth in their histories. **But then, where the writers of these affairs and our prophets leave off, thence shall I take my rise, and begin my history.**"

Josephus points out that Old Testament canon is till the reign of Artaxerxes ^[17]. Josephus mentions that their history written since Artaxerxes are not part of Old testament, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time ^[17]."

During the time of Maccabees, there were no prophets. This is mentioned in 1 Maccabees 4:46, 1 Maccabees 9:27, 1 Maccabees 14:41.

1 Maccabees 4:46 - "And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them.^[1]"

1 Maccabees 9:27 - "So was there a great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time that a prophet was not seen among them.^[1]"

1 Maccabees 14:41 - "Also that the Judeans and priests were well pleased that Simon should be their governor and high priest for ever, until there should arise a faithful prophet;^[1]"

So this means that Josephus is the first person to translate the history of Maccabees from Aramaic into Greek.

Religious Perspective on Maccabean Period

Maccabean Victory and Feast of rededication in 1 Maccabees 4 came as a result of the strong determination of Mattathias and his five sons in obeying the laws of God and Mattathias told his sons to obey the laws of God before his death ^[18].

After the death of Mattathias and Judas Maccabeus, Jonathan (the brother of Maccabeus) took over the leadership position of Judas Maccabeus ^[19].

During the high priesthood of Jonathan, Jonathan failed to keep the words of his father Mattathias on obeying the laws of God and this led to the establishment of the sects like Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes ^[20].

It was Pharisees who introduced Traditions of the Elders (aka Traditions of the forefathers) which was completely opposed by Jesus Christ in first century Israel due to the fact that Traditions of the Elders nullified the word of God ^[21].

Jesus Christ and his opposition towards traditions of the elders can be read in this link ^[22].

References

1. ↑ ^{1.0 1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 1.5 1.6 1.7 1.8} <http://ecmarsh.com/lxx/l%20Maccabees/index.htm>
2. ↑ Book "Introduction to Syriac" by Wheeler Thackston, Page 44
3. ↑ Book "Ceriani Veteris Testamentum", Page 610
4. ↑ ^{4.0 4.1 4.2} <https://archive.org/details/1MaccabeesAramaicVersionFromCerianiVeterisTestamentum>
5. ↑ 2 Kings 16:5 in Aramaic OT - http://madenkha.net/holy_bible/OT/12_Malke2.htm
6. ↑ Josephus' Antiquities Book I, Chapt. 6, Paragraph 4 & 4 Kings 16:5 in Septuagint - <http://qbible.com/brenton-septuagint/2-kings/16.html>
7. ↑ Matthew 4:24 in <http://www.peshitta.org/pdf/Mattich4.pdf>
8. ↑ <http://www.peshitta.org/pdf/Acts16.pdf>
9. ↑ <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/ANF-08/anf08-144.htm>
10. ↑ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/hegemon.html>
11. ↑ Matthew 27:2 in <http://www.peshitta.org/pdf/Mattich27.pdf>
12. ↑ Book "Ceriani Veteris Testamentum", Page 609
13. ↑ A photolithographic Facsimile Edition of Codex Ambrosianus was published in Milan by A. M. Ceriani, called Translatio Syro Pescitto Veteris Testamenti Ex Codice Ambrosianus, or "The Syriac Peshitta Old Testament Translation from Codex Ambrosianus, Page 104" (Milan: Angeli della Croce, 1876-1881)
14. ↑ <http://www.latinvulgate.com/lv/verse.aspx?t=0&b=45&c=2>

15. ↑ Wheeler Thackston's book "Introduction to Syriac", Page 35, 204
16. ↑ ^{16.0} ^{16.1} <https://archive.org/details/1MaccabeesAramaicVersionFromCerianiVeterisTestamentum>
17. ↑ ^{17.0} ^{17.1} Against Apion, Book 1, Paragraph 8
18. ↑ 1 Maccabees 2:20-27, 1 Maccabees 2:49-68
19. ↑ 1 Maccabees 9:31
20. ↑ Antiquities of Judeans XIII.V.IX.
21. ↑ Antiquities of Judeans Book XIII.X.VI, Antiquities of Judeans XIII.XVI.II, Matthew 15, Mark 7
22. ↑ http://en.metapedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ_and_Traditions_of_the_Elders

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